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Regional Cooperation: the Case of Pacific Islands Forum

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摘要

区域合作是国际关系研究的核心内容之一。在当今时期，区域合作的建立和加强是国际政策的主要特征之一。特别是在第二次世界大战之后，起始于欧洲的地区主义理念已经成为波及全球的主流现象。

本文所探讨的是大洋洲地区的区域合作，并且对目的在于加强该地区相互合作的机构——太平洋岛论坛（PIF）进行特别论述。太平洋群岛国家与该地区最原始的人类聚居地有着很强的社会、文化和历史渊源。这种关系导致岛国之间地区主义的产生，并且成为这一区域相互合作的基础。当前这些岛国面临共同的社会、政治和经济挑战。正如其他发展中国家一样，共同的利益和议题促使这些岛国进行区域合作，导致太平洋岛论坛（PIF）的建立。

本文分析了太平洋岛论坛保留了南太平洋论坛独特的组织形式、运作机制以及太平洋地区独立国家的政治诉求。这些较小的岛国对外部环境的抵御能力较弱，基于太平洋岛论坛的区域合作是应对这些共同议题的有效途径。区域合作已经成为维护和平、地区安全、发展和幸福的重要策略。合作增强了这些独立国家在全球化经济中维护本国利益的能力，这也是太平洋岛论坛力争的目标。

关键词：南太平洋；论坛；区域合作

ABSTRACT

Regional cooperation is one of the central features in the study of International Relations. It is basically a move to establish linkages between and among a group of countries within a given geographical space, motivated by common and shared interests. In this modern era the establishment and strengthening of regional cooperation and institutions has become one of the main characteristics of world politics. Especially after the Second World War the idea of regionalism has become a predominant phenomenon which began in Europe and spread across the globe in which there was a substantial increase in regionally based institutionalized cooperation among states. Today almost all independent states around the world are at least members to a regional or intergovernmental organization fostered through regional cooperation.

The discussion in this paper is on regional cooperation in the Oceania Region with special focus on the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) as the main regional institution that strengthens cooperation in the Region. The Pacific Island countries all lay towards the south of the tropic of Cancer in the Pacific Ocean and have long social, cultural and historical ties dating back as far as the first human settlement in the region. This strong relationship has fostered a sense of regionalism among the Island states and is currently seen as the foundation for cooperation in the region. Today the Pacific Island states are confronted with common social, political and economic challenges. Like other developing countries in the international system, the common interests and issues have prompted regional cooperation among these small island states which saw the establishment of PIF.

Since its inception as “South Pacific Forum (SPF)” in 1971 until the name changed in October 2000, PIF has remained the pre-eminent political organization and the political voice of the independent states of the Pacific region. Given the vulnerability of these smaller island states to outside influences, regional cooperation through PIF remains an effective avenue to address common issues in the region. Regional cooperation has now become an important strategy for achieving peace, security, development and welfare. Cooperation strengthens the position of individual States as they strive to secure their national interests in an integrating world economy and this is what the PIF strives to achieve in the Pacific Region.

Key Words: Pacific Islands, Forum, Regional Cooperation

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ACRONYMS

African Union.....	AU
Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.....	APEC
Association of Southeast Asian Nations.....	ASEAN
Economic Community of West African States.....	ECOWAS
European Coal and Steel Community.....	ECSE
European Economic Community.....	EEC
European Union.....	EU
Exclusive Economic Zones.....	EEZs
Forum Fisheries Agency.....	FFA
Forum Island Countries.....	FICs
Forum Officials Committee.....	FOC
Mercado Comun del Sur (Common Market of the Southern Cone Countries).....	MERCOSUR
Millennium Challenge Corporation.....	MCC
North American Free Trade Agreement.....	NAFTA
Official development assistance.....	ODA
Organization of American States.....	OAS
Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations.....	PACER
Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement.....	PICTA
Pacific Island Countries.....	PICs
Pacific Islands Forum.....	PIF
Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.....	RAMSI
Southern African Development Community.....	SADC
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.....	SAARC
South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation.....	SPEC
South Pacific Commission.....	SPC
South Pacific Forum.....	SPF
South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.....	SPNFZ
South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement.....	SPARTECA
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.....	TTPI
United Nations.....	UN
University of the South Pacific.....	USP

CHAPTER ONE

REGIONAL COOPERATION

1.1 Introduction

The discussion in this paper is on Regional Cooperation in the Pacific Region. The establishment and strengthening of regional cooperation and institutions has become one of the main characteristics of world politics in recent times. Since the end of the Second World War the idea of regionalism, that practically had its roots in Europe, became a predominant phenomenon which saw the substantial increase in regionally based institutionalized cooperation among states throughout the world. Today there are many regional organizations and institutions established around the world.

Oceania is one of the many regions where cooperation has been a key feature in its economic and political development. This paper aims to analyze the importance of regional cooperation focusing particularly on the role of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), a regional institution, which was established with that primary object of facilitating and strengthening regional cooperation among the fourteen Pacific island countries as well as Australia and New Zealand in Oceania. Since its inception in 1971, PIF used to have sixteen members but currently has fifteen as Fiji's membership to the forum was terminated in 2009. Apart from this, PIF has always been the pre-eminent political organization and voice of the independent states of the region, and will continue to do so in the many years to come.

This paper consists of six chapters. The discussions in the first chapter focus on the concepts of Regional Cooperation, Regional Organizations, as well as analyzing some of the main theories in the field of international relations that try to explain why states choose to cooperate and form regional organizations and institutions. The second chapter introduces the Pacific region and discusses some of the recent political and economic developments in the region. A brief definition of the concept of region as seen from the

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) perspective is also discussed. Chapter three introduces the PIF with discussions focusing on the development process and structure. The achievements and challenges of PIF is discussed in the fourth chapter while PIF' external relations is discussed in the fifth chapter. Finally the conclusion makes the sixth chapter.

1.2 DEFINING REGIONAL COOPERATION

To start off the discussion, the concept of 'regional cooperation' has to be first defined. There was much discussion in the literature on how to define the concept when early theorists tried to explain regional cooperation. But one thing that's certain is Regional Cooperation leads to Regional Integration where nations within a region develop strong network and relationship among themselves. Most theories of regional integration that have been developed have focused mainly on European integration. Europe was the region of the world, where regional integration started in the early 1950s with the establishment of European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. Hence, early efforts to study regional integration mainly concentrated on the ECSC and later European Economic Community (EEC) which is now the European Union (EU).

Karl Deutsch, a Czech political scientist, defined regional integration as "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population." When a group of people or states have been integrated this way they constitute a "security community." 'Amalgamation', on the other hand, was used by Deutsch and his collaborators to refer to "the formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government" . 2.

1 Finn Laursen (2003) Comparative regional integration: theoretical perspectives Ashgate Publishing Limited

2 Karl W. Deutsch (1954) Political Community at the International Level Ardvard Global Publishing Company, L.L.C. Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

Another critique, Ernest B Haas, a German-American political scientist, in his classical study of the ECSC, defined integration as “the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectation and political activities to a new center whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” .³

The objectives of regional integration could range from economics to politics although it has become a political economy initiative where commercial purposes are the means to achieve broader socio-political and security objectives. Past efforts at regional integration have often focused on removing barriers to free trade in the region, increasing the free movement of people, labor, goods, and capital across national borders, reducing the possibility of regional armed conflict (for example, through Confidence and Security-Building Measures), and adopting cohesive regional stances on policy issues, such as the environment, climate change and migration.

In the field of international relations, Regions are defined as territorially based subsystems of the international system. Accordingly, states are considered as subsystems of a regional system, which itself is part of the international system. The cooperation of states within a given region, then, denotes the process whereby territorial based subsystems increase their level of interaction. States within a given region decide to enter into a regional agreement in order to enhance cooperation through regional institutions and rules⁴.

Building on from that, in the work of an international relations scholar entitled “*the Political Economy of Regional Cooperation*” (1994), Andrew Axline stated that “the contemporary wave of regionalism can be better explained as an instrument to supplement, enhance or protect the role of the state and the power of the government in an interdependent world. The state today experiences a lack of capacity to handle global

³ Rosamond, Ben (2005) **The uniting of Europe and the foundation of EU studies: revisiting the neofunctionalism of Ernst B. Haas**, Journal of European Public Policy, Vol.12 (No.2). pp. 237-254. ISSN

⁴ Adler, Emanuel (2002) ‘**Constructivism and International Relations**’, in W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B. Simmons (eds.) **The Handbook of International Relations** (London: Sage), pp. 95–118.

challenges to national interest, and increasingly respond by 'pooling sovereignty'. At the same time they gave up sovereignty and may ultimately end up as semi independent parts of larger political communities"⁵.

With that, it can be concluded that regional integration is the joining of individual states within a region into a larger whole. However the degree of integration depends upon the willingness and commitment of independent sovereign states to share their sovereignty. Thus, integration would then be interpreted as the process by which the formerly independent units hand over a fraction of their sovereignty to common institutions or organizations.

1.3 REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The efforts of regional cooperation and integration are usually enhanced through the creation of regional organizations and institutions. Regional organizations have today become important players in world politics. These organizations are established with institutional structures and procedures, and often operate independently to foster cooperation and political and economic dialogue amongst states or entities. It is common among all regional organizations that membership is usually restricted to boundaries and demarcations characteristic to a defined and unique geography, such as continents, or geopolitics, such as economic blocks. Member states within a given region agree to establish regional organizations and institutions that would function to serve a particular purpose or purposes for the benefit of these members. Regional Organizations can also be seen as international organizations, as they incorporate international membership and encompass geopolitical entities that operationally transcend a single nation state.

Examples of some leading and successful regional institution around the world today include the European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Arab League,

⁵ Andrew Axline (1994), **"The Political Economy of Regional Cooperation: Comparative Case Studies"** .Floral Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 9DS, United Kingdom and University Associated Press.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). These regional organizations serve as avenues for member states in the respective regions to pursue their common interests. They have also been very influential over the years in shaping world politics. Perhaps the most well known and developed attempt at regional integration has been the European Union, which in some policy areas has moved beyond an intergovernmental approach to decision making at a federalist or supra-state level.⁶

It has been a common tradition, since the end of the Second World War, that regional cooperation agreements were formed around economic, political or environmental objectives which saw the establishment of many regional organizations to serve those purposes. However, over the last decades these organizations have gradually penetrated into the peace and security sphere and developed their capacities in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, or post-war reconstruction. This is evident in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, where regional and other intergovernmental organizations have been empowered by the United Nations (UN) and national governments to maintain peace and security concurrently. With the widespread threat of terrorism, especially after the 9/11 incident, environmental pollution and global warming, and the increase of trans-border diseases as well as organized international crimes, regional institutions and organizations have now extended focus on their traditional roles into accommodating these new threats and issues.

Regional institutions and organizations are able to overcome the shortcomings of individual states by pooling human resources and attracting and retaining highly skilled personnel⁷. Their operations provide economies of scale, allow for the sharing of technology and knowledge, and also provide administrative savings, in comparison to non-cooperative behavior.

6 Rosamond, Ben (2005) The uniting of Europe and the foundation of EU studies: revisiting the neofunctionalism of Ernst B. Haas, Journal of European Public Policy, Vol.12 (No.2). pp. 237-254. ISSN

7 ADB ANNUAL REPORT 2001, EMPOWERING NATIONS THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION, Asian Development Bank. (different way of writing the title, why?)

1.4 THEORIES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Why do states around the world engage in the establishment of regional cooperation and institutions? A better explanation to this behavior of states can be obtained from theories of international relations. As already stated, the early theories of regional integration either focused on European integration or were inspired by it. However, generally, in international relations the analysis of regional integration has been dominated by a cluster of realism/neorealism, neo-liberal institutionalism, and functionalism/neo-functionalism theories.

1.4.1 Realism/Neorealism

Realism (also known as Classical Realism) is a school of international relations that prioritizes national interest and security over ideology, moral concerns and social reconstructions. Classical realism argues that it is fundamentally the nature of man that pushes states and individuals to act in a way that places interests over ideologies.

Neorealism derives from classical realism except that instead of human nature, its focus is predominantly on the international system. According to Kenneth N. Waltz, the relationship between states and the broad outcomes of international politics are strongly influenced and are derived from the constraints that are placed on states by anarchic structure of the international system rather than from individual unit behavior. The state is the pre-eminent actor and all other actors in international politics are of lesser significance. Secondly, because of anarchy, all states have fixed preferences which are the primacy of survival and security. Security itself is the functions of power which is defined in terms of the capabilities of a state relative to others. Coexistence in a situation of self-help can only be achieved through the recurrent balance of power of states against each other.⁸

⁸ Kenneth N Waltz (1979) Theory of International Politics McGraw Hill Inc. USA

With regards to regional integration, “both classical realism and its neorealist variants stress the importance of external configurations of power, the dynamics of power-political competition, and the constraining role of the international political system considered as a whole.”⁹ Regional integration can be explained in four ways in which neorealists believe hegemony can serve as a powerful stimulus to regional cooperation:

- (a) as a means of countering hegemonic power projection of hegemonic pretensions; for instance, ASEAN against Vietnam and China, Southern African Development Community (SADC) against South Africa, and Mercado Comun del Sur (MERCOSUR) (Common Market of the Southern Cone Countries) against the United States;
- (b) as an attempt to restrict the free exercise of hegemonic power by entrapping the potential hegemon within the strictures of a regional organization. The case of Germany in Europe is an example;
- (c) bandwagoning with the hegemon for benefits, especially when power differentials are great within a region; and
- (d) as a way for a declining hegemonic power to entrap potential rivals in an institution to reduce the transaction and informational costs (Hurrell, 1995:50-53)¹⁰.

To the neorealists, therefore, regional integration takes place in response to hegemonic power projections, or through the convergence of national interests.

1.4.2 Neo-liberalism (also neo-liberal institutionalism)

Neo-liberalism emphasizes the increasing levels of interdependence between states which are forcing them to cooperate and integrate¹¹. This theory credited largely to Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, conceptualizes cooperative behaviors among states. According

9 “**The Regional Dimensions of International Relations Theory**” in Mary Farrell (ed.) “*Global Politics of Regionalism*” (2005) Pluto Press, London.

10 Andrew Hurrell (1995), **Explaining the resurgence of regionalism in world politics** Review of International Studies, Cambridge University Press.

11 Baldwin, David (ed.) (1993) **Neorealism and Neoliberalism** (New York: Columbia University Press).

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